

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Nuclear Testing and Nuclear Weapons

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our deep concern about reports that your administration is considering the development of a new generation of low-yield nuclear weapons and the resumption of underground nuclear testing.

Accelerating preparations for underground nuclear testing undermines a moratorium that has been upheld for nearly 10 years by both Republican and Democratic administrations. The development of a new generation of low-yield nuclear weapons would require the termination of an existing legislative prohibition on such activity, sending a resoundingly negative signal to allies and potential adversaries alike that the US is abandoning international efforts to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As the steward of the most awesome array of nuclear weapons on earth, the United States has the responsibility for handling its nuclear stockpile in a way that demonstrates our strong commitment to refraining from the use of these weapons. This is particularly true given the events of September 11 and the need to maintain a strong anti-terror coalition. Now is not the time to send an ambiguous non-proliferation message to our international partners in the war against terrorism.

Abandoning the current moratorium on nuclear testing would be an inexplicable reversal of U.S. policy at this time and serve to undermine your commendable decision last year to begin reducing our nation's arsenal of strategic warheads. While we are encouraged by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's clarification that the Nuclear Posture Review does not contain a formal recommendation to resume testing, it nevertheless contemplates turning the current red light against nuclear testing to yellow, thereby causing other nations to wonder when that light will turn green, and to "hedge" their own nuclear weapons programs accordingly. Moreover, it is occurring within the context of other related decisions concerning nuclear weapons, particularly your announcement of withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the administration's continuing antipathy toward the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Historically, America has played a leading role in promoting international measures aimed at halting nuclear proliferation. If America demonstrates a renewed commitment to nuclear weapons, other nations will follow our lead, encouraging the proliferation of weapons-grade material and devices in other nations and weakening our ability to prevent it.

The tragic events that our nation has endured recently have garnered us the good will of an unprecedented coalition of nations. We should use this unique opportunity to advance—not damage—the prospects for achieving stronger international curbs on the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Adopting an aggressive nuclear posture by resuming testing and new weapons development is a step backward into the hostile policies of the Cold War era, and a virtual invitation to other nations to opt out of the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. We ask for your clear and unambiguous

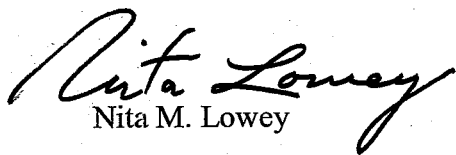
assurance that, absent the emergence of grave new threats to national survival that cannot be deterred by the current enduring stockpile, the United States will neither resume underground nuclear test explosions nor pursue the development of new nuclear weapons.

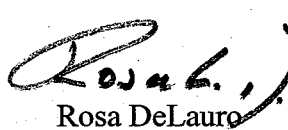
Sincerely,

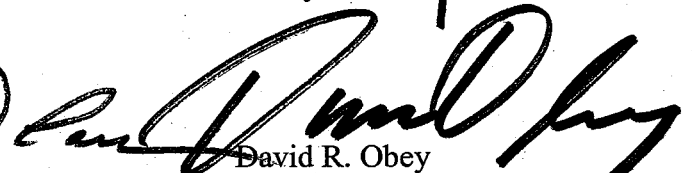

Edward J. Markey


Richard A. Gephardt

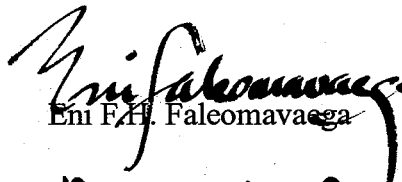

Nancy Pelosi

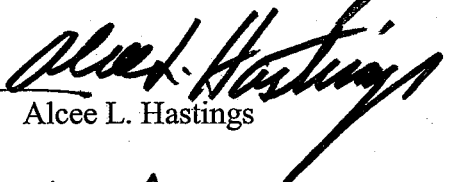

Nita M. Lowey

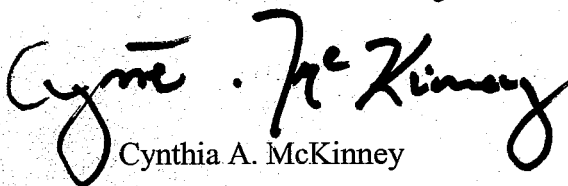

Rosa DeLauro

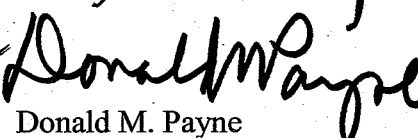

David R. Obey

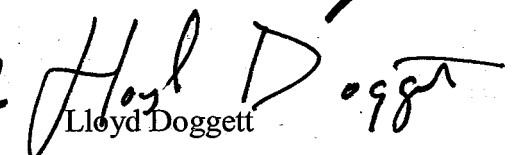

Peter J. Visclosky

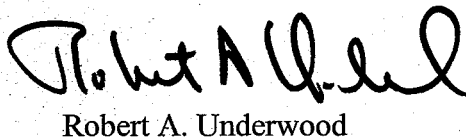

Eni F.H. Faleomavaega


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Cynthia A. McKinney


Donald M. Payne


Lloyd Doggett

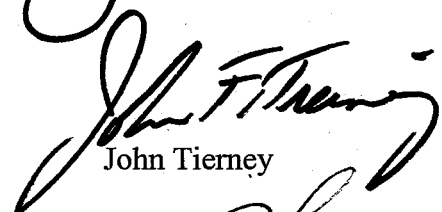

Robert A. Underwood

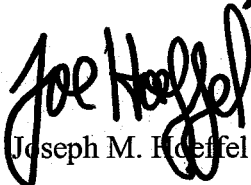

Barbara Lee

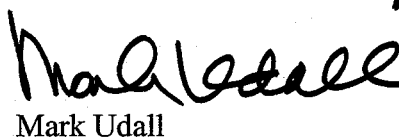

Jim McDermott

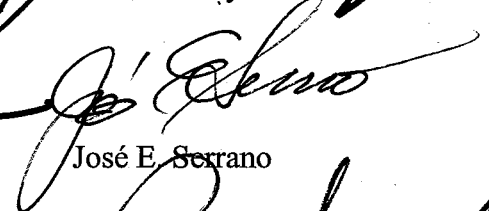

Peter DeFazio

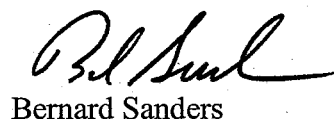

George Miller


John Tierney

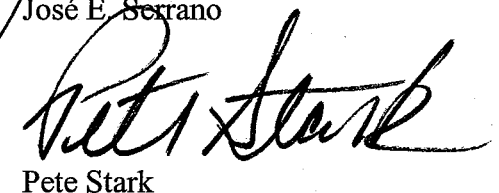

Joseph M. Hoeffel

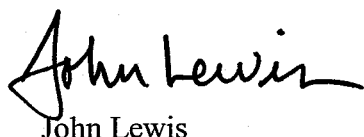

Mark Udall

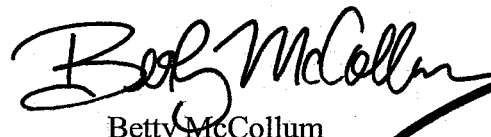

José E. Serrano

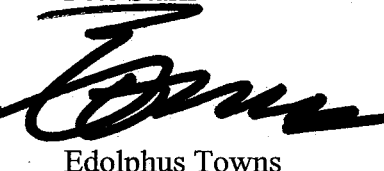

Bernard Sanders


Earl Blumenauer


Pete Stark


John Lewis


Betty McCollum


Edolphus Towns

Lane Evans
Lane Evans

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Frank Pallone, Jr.

Sherrod Brown
Sherrod Brown

Jerold Nadler
Jerold Nadler

Bob Filner
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Marty Meehan
Marty Meehan

Tammy Baldwin
Tammy Baldwin

Lynn Woolsey
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Tom Allen
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Hilda L. Solis
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Martin O. Sabo
Martin Olav Sabo

Sheila Jackson Lee
Sheila Jackson Lee

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Rush Holt

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Darlene Hooley
Darlene Hooley

Diane E. Watson
Diane E. Watson

Janice D. Schakowsky
Janice D. Schakowsky

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Carolyn B. Maloney

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Bobby L. Rush
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William Delahunt

Bill Luther
Bill Luther

Julia Carson
Julia Carson

David Price
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Diana DeGette
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